Teacher Resources - Forum on Indian Education

Note: The following videos will open in a new browser window.

Boarding School

http://www.uen.org/indianed/videos/boarding school bb.html

The boarding school experience was an idea of early military and religious missionaries who believed that Indian students must become like the white man. That idea and experiences that followed for many American Indian tribes led to humiliating experiences resulting in a degradation of cultures and loss of language by the children. The traumatic experience started a cycle of educational fear for some American Indian tribes that continues today.

The philosophy of education for the American Indians was a sound idea but the process of forced education was not. Many American Indian people today who survived early 20th century forced military or religious education have gone on to become leaders in their tribe or communities but speak out about the discontinued practices of taking children from their families and placement in foster homes or in boarding schools.

Contributions

http://www.uen.org/indianed/videos/contributions bb.html

There are assumptions that when Europeans came to this continent that the people living here were ignorant and poor. In fact, most of the tribes were self-sufficient in food, medicine, clothing and also had organized societies.

American Indian tribes throughout the centuries have lived in harmony with the earth and tried to live peacefully with the Europeans who came to their lands. The many tribes that they encountered taught the new people about their foods, hunting, fishing and their way of governing themselves. As when two cultures meet, there is an exchange of cultures and the American Indians contributed so much during the early settlement period while they lost so much.

Heroes and Leaders

http://www.uen.org/indianed/videos/heroes and leaders bb.html

The American Indian people have always had strong leaders who provided moral courage and strength in good times, bad times, peace and war. The educational system neglects to teach about earlier leaders who made a difference in the development of the United States for example, the Iroquois Confederation was a model for the United States Constitution which held together 13 colonies.

The heroes from the past who led their tribes in battle were trying to protect their homeland from encroachers or from the military who were seeking to move their entire tribe to another part of the country. Such people as Chief Manuelito of the Navajo Nation, Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse of the Lakota Nation, Chief Washakie of the Utes, Chief Ouray of the Utes and more recent heroes such as Billy Mills the Olympic Gold Medal winner are people that our young students should stand tall when talking about them.

The Stand Tall Program that is used to teach pride in heritage to young American Indian students today uses the courage and leadership stories of strong leaders from the past. The Navajo Code Talkers who served so brilliantly during World War II are/were men of today who showed bravery and creativity to defend their mother country in using an unbreakable code to transmit military plans and needs.

Many Tribes

http://www.uen.org/indianed/videos/many tribes bb.html

It is not well known that there are over 570 federally recognized tribes in the United States and Alaska. Each tribe has their own language and customs and they have been in the North America continent for hundreds and perhaps thousands of years. Migration from the north and south has led to sharing of cultures, trade of materials, intermarriage and continuation of development for the tribes.

Earlier tribes did not believe that any one tribe or group of people "owned" part of the earth but that Mother Earth belonged to everyone. Some tribes laid claim to large areas of land in which they hunted, planted, and built homes, but for some reason moved to another area and left behind entire communities. In Arizona the remains of Canyon de chay and "Anasazi" communities are good examples. In Ohio, the mounds that were discovered

there show that tribes had developed a trade culture and built large communities.

The area where different tribes lived determined their lifestyles. The Great Plains Indian tribes lived in teepees and used the horse as transportation and hunted the buffalo as their main food staple. Indian tribes living by the Atlantic or Pacific oceans used fish for food and shells and other goods from the sea as important parts of their lives.

Parent Involvement

http://www.uen.org/indianed/videos/parental_involvement_bb.html

American Indian parents must be involved and want to be involved in school activities of their children. It is important that they be invited to participate in a meaningful manner in the school environment. Currently, many parents feel isolated from the school culture and unwelcome to participate.

American Indian parents want their children to succeed but some are reluctant to get involved because of their own school experiences. All parents should be shown how the school works, how students can learn and what families can do to help student success.

The curriculum that students are taught should include the history of the American Indian in a positive light and parents would be inclined to feel more welcome at school.

Stereotyping

http://www.uen.org/indianed/videos/stereotyping bb.html

Discrimination hurts all of us and schools play an important role in eliminating bias, racism and stereotyping. Words can be hurtful and misleading. Educators should be vigilant in their use of materials that stereotype American Indians as anything less than what they are.

Programs exist to help teachers and administrators learn about discrimination and how it can be eliminated in schools. That program is called REACH (Respecting Ethnic and Cultural Heritage) and teaches that we all have culture regardless of our color, language or religion. One culture is not more important than another. When students are taught tolerance it leads to understanding and acceptance.

Student Success

http://www.uen.org/indianed/videos/student_success_bb.html

When schools have a goal that ALL students can succeed then they ensure that the American Indian students/Alaskan Natives students have a voice in their success. Reducing the gap in achievement between non-Indian and American Indian students is a priority for all, educators, parents and students.

Curriculum should be include success stories of American Indian History and include the perspective of the American Indians. American Indian students should be proud of their heritage and stand tall. All students should know that American Indians are not artifacts but rather a contributing part of society today. They live in communities throughout Utah as well as on reservations.

Treaties and Sovereignty

http://www.uen.org/indianed/videos/treaties sovereignty bb.html

American Indian parents and educators want to be sure that promises that were made through treaties are kept. The education of American Indian students is part of the promises.

The American Indians have a special relationship to the United States Government which was established by Congress and it is a nation to nation understanding. It is a unique relationship that came into being as a result of the American Indian tribes losing their land and being placed on reservations. Understanding this relationship and why it exists is important for all students to know and that is why teaching the true history of American Indian tribes should be included in the core curriculum of social studies.